

January 23 and 24, 2006

Staff Summary

Evening session on January 23, 2006

The first presentation was a set of graphs and charts that demonstrate the historical and projected student enrollments in K-12 from Asian Pacific, Hispanic, African American, American Indian and White students. This information set the stage for panel presentations.

The Executive Directors of the three minority affairs commissions and the Governor's office of Indian Affairs made presentations. They were asked to do the following:

You are speaking to the architects of a new K-12 system. What three elements would be present in a newly redesigned education system to ensure academic success?

A brief summary of their recommendations:

ELLEN ABELLERA, COMMISSION ON ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN AFFAIRS

1. Build trust in the community. Outreach will help bring in the immigrant community.
2. Provide regular cultural sensitivity training. Be proactive in hiring bilingual teachers from the community.
3. Intervene in the cycle of intergenerational literacy. Parents find it hard to help their students when they don't speak English.

Uriel Iniguez, Commission on Hispanic Affairs

1. Increase parent / community participation. This is more than conferences and requires new approaches.
2. Build teacher / administrator awareness. Teachers need to have experiences in cultures and communities that are different than theirs. Curriculum should represent different cultures and peoples.
3. More one-on-one attention to students. Look at ways to connect individually with students. Possible models include accelerated schools and success for all.

Rosalund Jenkins, Commission on African American Affairs:

Three elements that she believes are held in common with other groups of color:

- 1) Expand engagement and involvement of parents and the larger community.
- 2) Increase the diversity of teachers, aides and counselors.
- 3) Invest in English as a Second Language for all children who are not proficient in speaking, reading, and writing Standard American English. In this area include African American students who speak variants of Standard English. Often these

students have adopted these variants early in life. They use ungrammatical phrases and sentence structures, colloquial vocabulary, and nonstandard verb conjugation and nonstandard prepositional phrases.

The specific recommendation related to African American learners:

- 1) Eliminate the stereotypes associated with dark skinned people and impact the success of students because: disparities exist in student discipline, level of performance expectation, disproportionate "labeling" as learning disabled and behaviorally disordered, etc.
- 2) Redesign teaching methods, the school day, school week, school year, and the overall "customer interface" of the educational system to make them culturally relevant to families and communities of color. Rosalund gave as an example the strong focus on oral instruction that places many African American learners - especially boys - at a disadvantage; developing more kinetic teaching strategies would be one improvement. (My comment - probably for many students!)
- 3) Invest in proven practices. Educational research exists that highlights best practices for the African American population; it has been developed by African American researchers. This work should be acknowledged - we should not wait for white researchers to come to the same findings.

Craig Bill, Governor's Office on Indian Affairs:

1. Look at cultural integration. Build staff / teacher sensitivity to cultures and make curriculum more culturally relevant. Examples are the First Peoples Language Project and the Tribal History bill implementation.
2. Create more family and community involvement. Look for possible strategies via the federal Title VII outreach activities, look at wrap-around services and take meetings to parents and the community rather than holding always at school.
3. Bridge the technology gap. Develop K-20 network capacity and community organization capacity to provide access to computers and programs that support school work.

Committee discussion with panel members followed the presentations. Topic discussed included:

How can parent involvement result in increased student scores?

What are strategies to increase minority staff?

How can we get better male performance?

How do we address lack of parent understanding about what it takes to be successful?

How can we change the educational structure to increase involvement?

January 24, 2006

DECISION-MAKING

The committee discussed decision-making procedures. Kevin made the motion and Gloria seconded it to follow a process by which the committee discusses an item, formal motions can be put on the floor, the item will be debated following parliamentary procedures and a majority vote will ultimately decide the matter.

Discussion also addressed the possibility for needing a supermajority to approve some matters. This motion can be made and adopted via the procedure outlined above.

(See updated operating procedures document.)

SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL DISTRICT MODEL DISCUSSION AND CRITERIA

The committee heard a presentation by Larry Picus on the Successful District Model and reviewed a set of criteria to be used to implement this model. Considerable discussion followed about the criteria items to be included:

- No model is pure
- This model is a snap-shot of today, not where we want to be
- Concern about how high to set the standard of "success"
- Concern that suggested criteria do not address effort and growth
- Concern that "success" must be informed by student demographics and improvement

Motion: Made by Paul Rosier, Seconded by Tim Washburn and approved by the Committee

I move that the K-12 learning advisory committee of Washington Learns use the following success criteria for the initial exploration of the successful district approach to school finance adequacy.

1. WASL scores in reading, writing and math at grades 4, 7 and 10;
2. On-time graduation rates;
3. Learning index - a composite for a district showing movement of students from WASL categories or below basic through advanced;
4. Data will be examined for three years - 2003-2005;
5. Districts will be categorized by locale and size;
6. All districts will be included except those that are extremely small;
7. Districts will be categorized by poverty quartiles using free and reduced price lunch data;

8. At this initial stage there will be no efficiency analysis.

Based on the results of this analysis, districts will be reported as meeting the criteria as follows: Those that meet all 33 criteria, those that meet fewer than 33 and at least 30 criteria, those that meet fewer than 30 and at least 27 criteria and, possibly those that meet fewer than 27 and at least 24 criteria.

Average spending per student will be reported in terms of basic apportionment, local levy, state categorical funds and federal categorical funds.

The consultants are asked to explore the possibility of incorporating racial and ethnic data into the examination of the above criteria."

EVIDENCE-BASED MODEL INTRODUCTION

Alan Odden began a review of the many issues addressed in the resource document provided to the committee. The remainder of the document will be reviewed at the next meeting.

As various issues were reviewed the following ideas were expressed:

- As we implement new strategies, how do we measure it to see if it has had the positive effect?
- When focusing on struggling students, look at poverty factors. In addition to looking at extra help, also focus on the regular curriculum and how its use can help students. Need to look at tutoring and extended learning opportunities.
- Are teachers having difficulty serving students? Look at teacher skill instead of just sending kids to summer school.

Need to look at various ways we serve ELL students - bilingual programs and sheltered English programs.